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ABSTRACT

The study relates an attempt to prepare teachers of the mentally retarded regarding new teaching methods. Emphasis is placed on methods of learning rather than the careful diagnosis of the child's disability. Through the study, selective groups of special education master teachers (supervisory personnel with classroom experience) were trained in three methods: operant conditioning, psycholinguistics, and programed learning. The teachers learned the theoretical model and functional application of each method in order to serve as leaders and consultants in inservice training. The results of using the three methodologies with retarded children are presented by the use of illustrative case studies. Based on the positive results of the study, recommendations are presented for the implementation of the training of special education teachers. (CD)

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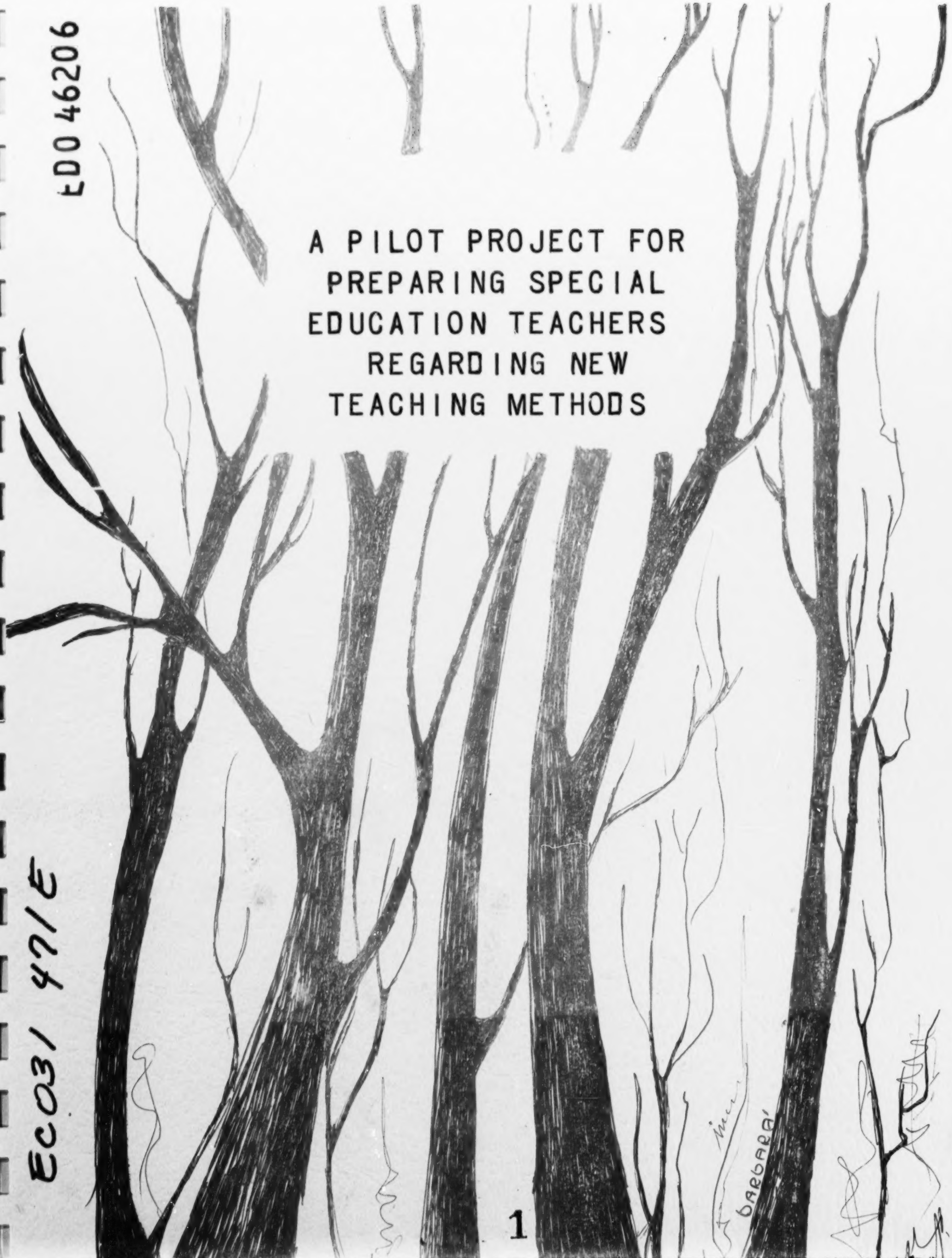
A PILOT PROJECT FOR PREPARING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS REGARDING NEW TEACHING METHODS



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FINAL REPORT

A PILOT PROJECT FOR PREPARING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS REGARDING NEW TEACHING METHODS

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Kanawha Valley Graduate Center
Nitro, West Virginia

September, 1970

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is a rapid increase in the development of research concerning new methods to be used in the education of the mentally retarded. Many of these new methods are based upon theoretical models of learning and substantiated by empirical data.

Haring and Lovitt (1969) have reviewed the literature showing the success in using operant conditioning with the mentally retarded. A detailed description related to this particular method with mentally retarded females in an institutional setting has been reported by Lent (1968).

The application of psycholinguistics with the mentally retarded has been emphasized by Wiseman (1964), Kass (1966), and Karnes (1968).

Malpass (1967) has shown that mentally retarded can increase their academic skills by the use of programmed learning materials.

However, the lag that exists between empirical evidence and the actual application of new methods in special education classes implies that the special education teachers are not using many of these new methods.

To rectify this situation, various approaches have been undertaken. Smith (1968) has shown that teacher-training programs at colleges and universities can retrain teachers in new methods by coordinating method courses with direct application with the mentally retarded.

Meyen (1969) has shown that a state-wide in-service training program for special education teachers can be improved if the sessions

focus on topics that the teachers consider important.

Haring and Lovitt (1969) describe how it can be possible to train teachers to use operant conditioning in a realistic setting.

It appears that special education teachers benefit from various types of training programs that emphasize the practical understanding and direct implications of theoretical models for educating the mentally retarded.

Purpose of This Study

The State of West Virginia has had special education programs for the mentally retarded for only a relatively short period of time. However, in 1974 this state will join the selective group of states having legislation requiring mandatory special education. The critical part of the implementation of this act is the training of large numbers of special education teachers in the shortest period of time. This limited amount of time that is available to prepare special education teachers requires a crash program that shows signs of being creative as well as functional and still retain quality work.

Traditionally, it has been the standard procedure for most special education teachers to plan their teaching programs based upon the careful diagnosis of the handicapped child. However, it is becoming more and more apparent that this type of diagnosis is concerned with psychological, medical, educational achievement, and family background. All too often, the special education teacher when learning of the child's limitations becomes more concerned with the child's handicap and therefore lowers expectations for this individual. Although most of this information

is relevant to the handicap of the individual, it does not necessarily follow that this information will help the teachers to learn to interpret behavioral patterns which are compatible to learning (Schiefelbusch, 1969). Rather than being primarily concerned with the individual's disability, the emphasis should be on methods of learning. Thus, there will need to be a reorientation and training in the thinking of many special education teachers.

Objectives of This Study

1. To train a number of special education master teachers (S.E.M.T.) in new methods for educating the mentally retarded children.

2. To prepare a selected number of special education master teachers (S.E.M.T.) as leaders of in-service training for inexperienced special education teachers in the application of new methods for mentally retarded children.

3. To train a selected number of special education master teachers (S.E.M.T.) to act as consultants for the implementation and evaluation of new methods by inexperienced special education teachers.

The term, special education master teacher (S.E.M.T.), was used in this study in reference to supervisors of special education programs who have some formal training in this field, special education teachers who have completed graduate work in this field and have a minimum of three years teaching experience, special education teachers who are taking graduate work in this field and a selective group of full-time graduate students in special education.

Through this study, selective groups of S.E.M.T. were trained concerning three specific methods: operant conditioning, psycholinguistics,

and programmed learning. Throughout this study, these S.E.M.T. learn the theoretical model and functional application of each method.

This project attempted to enlighten among S.E.M.T. an approach that would allow diagnostic learning based upon specific methods that implement learning. The characteristics of the disability of the handicapped were kept to a minimum.

The use of special education master teachers as leaders to train other special education teachers was expected to help avoid the ivory tower image that is all too often associated with professorial presentation of new methods.

CHAPTER II

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Part I: Training of Special Education Master Teachers

The special education master teachers represented state supervisors in special education, county supervisors in special education, college instructors in special education, teachers of educable and trainable mentally retarded children, and graduate students in special education.

Originally, twenty-three special education teachers participated in this study to become special education master teachers. However, due to personal illness, family commitments, school holidays, and inclement weather, only fifteen individuals successfully completed the entire study. The names of these fifteen S.E.M.T. are shown in Table I.

The training sessions were held on Saturday mornings, and each session lasted for three hours. The sessions consisted of informal lectures and discussions, films, demonstration lessons, and assigned readings.

Each method was presented by a consultant who was considered as an expert concerning this specific approach. The names of each consultant and each consultant's specific method are shown in Table II.

After the completion of the training sessions, each special education master teacher was asked to pick one method that was of most pertinent interest to the teacher's needs. After the method was determined, the S.E.M.T. met in groups according to interests and prepared various ways of presenting the material to special education teachers in their respective communities.

TABLE I

SPECIAL EDUCATION MASTER TEACHERS

1.	Anderson, Ruth	W. Va. Dept. of Mental Health
2.	Adkins, Earlene	Teacher Cabell County
3.	Ashworth, Wilhelmina	Supervisor of Special Education Fayette County
4.	Cook, Iva Dean	Teacher Cabell County
5.	Cowan, Hilary	Graduate Student West Virginia University Kanawha Valley Graduate Center
6.	Deacon, Patricia	Teacher Cabell County
7.	Elswick, Rosemary	Instructor Glenville State College
8.	Hanrahan, Harriet	Teacher Cabell County
9.	Haywood, Scott	Teacher Putnam County
10.	Lambert, Nancy	Teacher Kanawha County
11.	Loy, Virginia	Graduate Student West Virginia University Kanawha Valley Graduate Center
12.	Norman, Mary	Teacher Kanawha County
13.	Oakes, Ruth	Teacher Kanawha County
14.	Radcliff, Wanda	State Supervisor Gilmer County
15.	Thornton, Greta	Teacher Putnam County

TABLE II

CONSULTANTS

1.	Dr. John Neisworth University of Delaware	Operant Conditioning
2.	Dr. Richard Woodcock American Guidance Service	The Peabody Rebus Reading Program
3.	Dr. Jean Lockerson University of Maryland	Psycholinguistics
4.	Dr. Wayne Sengstock Georgia State University	Programmed Learning

Part II: In-Service Training

Each S.E.M.T., upon returning to the respective communities, established in-service training programs to train other special education teachers regarding one particular method. The format for these in-service training sessions were as follows:

1. The special education master teacher (S.E.M.T.) presented the theory of one particular method.

2. The special education master teacher (S.E.M.T.) demonstrated how each method was to be used with mentally retarded children.

3. The special education master teacher (S.E.M.T.) served as a consultant to the other special education teachers related to personal problems encountered in applying the particular method.

These S.E.M.T. were allowed individual discretion as to their particular manner of presenting each specific method. These in-service training sessions varied in the length of individual sessions and number of times they were held.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The fact that only a limited amount of time was used: (1) for the in-service training of the special education teachers by the S.E.M.T., and (2) the limited use of these three methods by the special education teachers with mentally retarded children, made the reporting of the results in most cases descriptive.

Thus, the results of using these three methodologies by the special education teachers with their mentally retarded students were organized into the following sections.

Section I. The findings related to the use of operant conditioning by the special education teachers.

Section II. The use of the Peabody Rebus Reading Program by special education teachers.

The case study approach was used to substantiate the findings of special education teachers' use of these two methods with mentally retarded students.

Section III. The narrative reports of special education teachers' use of psycholinguistic skills.

Finally, Section IV - the use of various types of programmed learning materials by special education teachers.

The limited time to use the last two methods, psycholinguistics and programmed learning materials by the special education teachers, allowed for only short narrative reporting.

SECTION I

OPERANT CONDITIONING

Group One

Special Education Master Teachers	Special Education Teachers
Anderson, Ruth	Booker, Dorothy
Cowan, Hilary	Monohan, Lois
Loy, Virginia	Reed, Mildred
	Walker, Barbara

The in-service training sessions took place at the Charleston Day Care Center in Kanawha County. During the in-service training sessions, the special education teachers were taught the steps involved in using operant conditioning, how to keep the graphs and various ways to determine the correct types of reinforcements. These training sessions were made more realistic by showing films that illustrate the use of operant conditioning with children similar to those at this day care center. Although this method was applied to many mentally retarded children in this day care center, the following two cases represent typical results of using operant conditioning by these special education teachers.

CASE I

This child's specific problem (see Figure 1) was concerned with continual sucking of the thumb. The child was informed that if she would keep her thumb out of her mouth for ten minutes she would be rewarded immediately with peanuts to be eaten.

PROBLEM: Sucking of Thumb

NAME: Female

REWARD: Peanuts

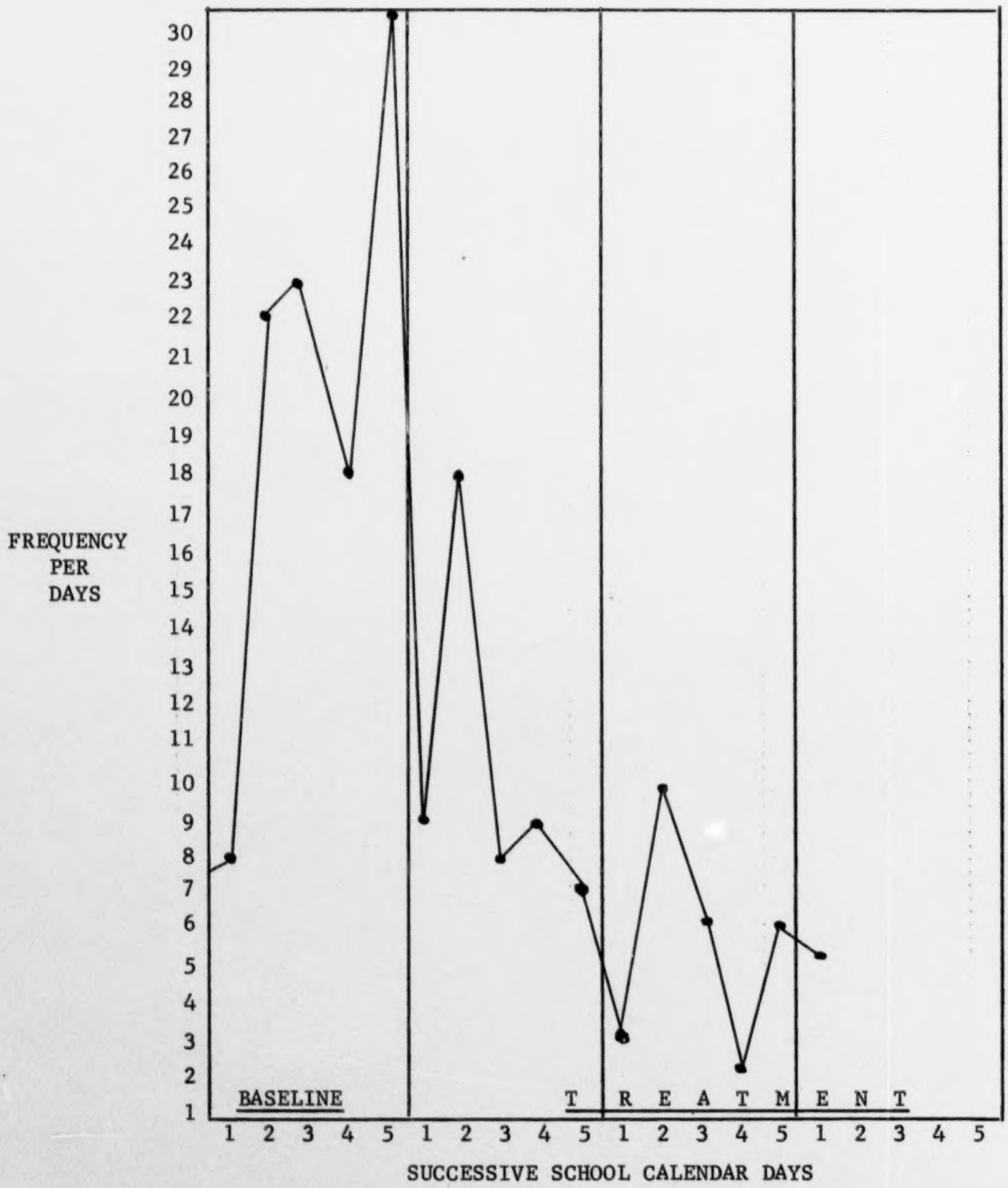

FIGURE 1

The results of this case study as shown in Figure 1 impressed these special education teachers with this particular method.

Her mother reported that the child's total behavior at home was improved since this conditioning began.

CASE II

This subject was a nine year old mentally retarded child in the Charleston Day Care Center. His problem was related to wet pants. During the first week (see Figure 2) a record was kept of the number of times he wet his pants each day.

Starting with the second week, the child was informed that if he kept his pants dry for an alloted period of time, he would receive a teaspoon of ice cream.

The wet pants were decelerated, and dry pants became the routine pattern after three weeks.

Group Two

Special Education Master Teachers	Special Education Teachers
Adkins, Earlene	Baylous, Carolyn
Deacon, Patricia	Bing, Willie Dean
	Clary, Erma
	Maynard, Dianna

The in-service training sessions were held at Oley Elementary School in Huntington, Cabell County. The training sessions consisted of getting the special education teachers to understand the steps involved in using operant conditioning, identifying specific behaviors to be modified, graphing behaviors and using operant conditioning with

PROBLEM: Wet Pants

NAME: Male

REWARD: Teaspoon of Ice Cream

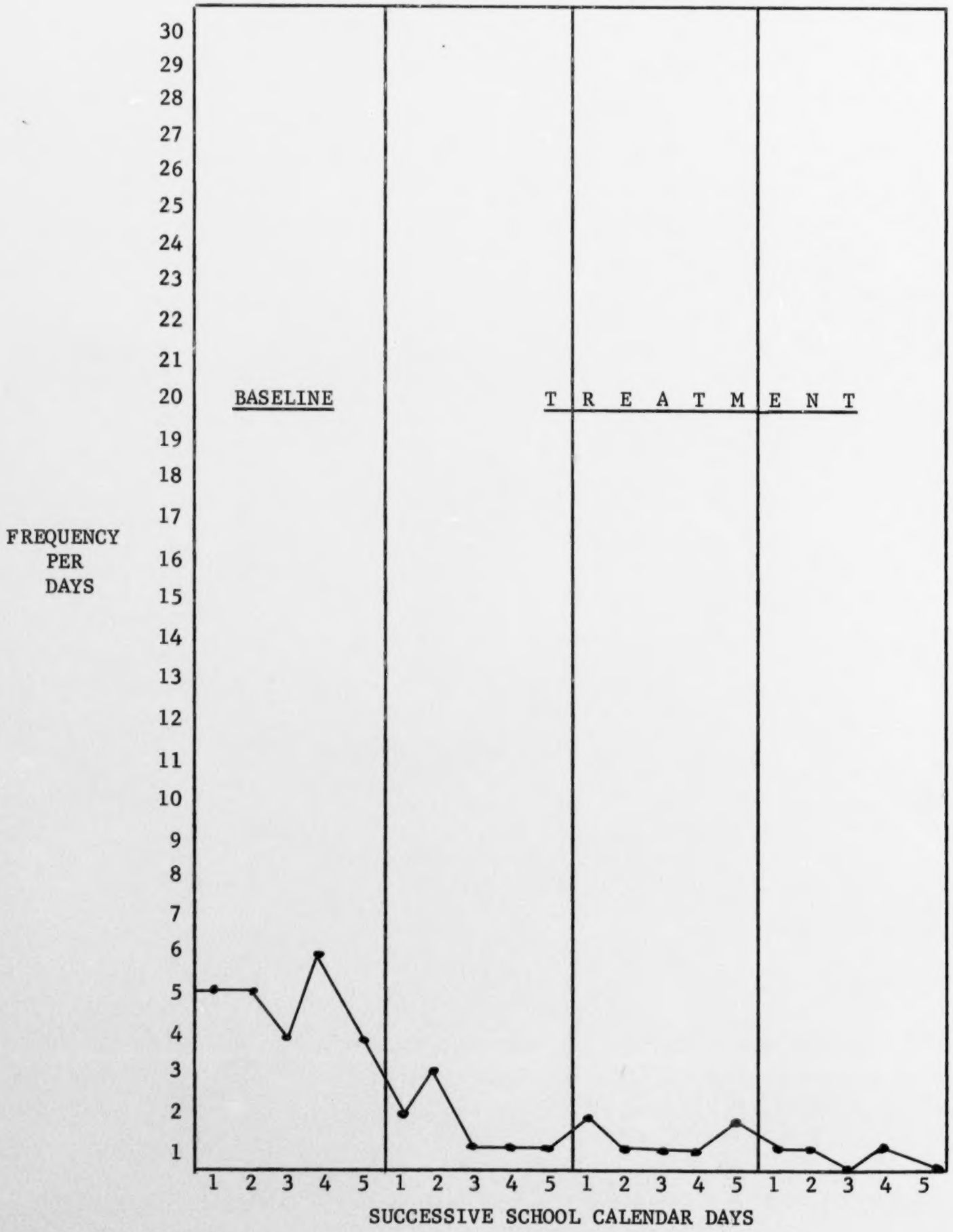

FIGURE 2

individuals and groups. In this group, the S.E.M.T. used terminology that was more meaningful to the special education teachers.

The following two case studies represent a cross-section of the results of those special education teachers who used operant conditioning with mentally retarded children in the Cabell County Public School System.

CASE III

This subject is a fourteen year old trainable mentally retarded individual who covered his eyes as soon as attention was centered on him. During the observation week, the special education teacher noticed that this child covered his eyes between thirty to forty times a day (see Figure 3).

Verbal praise was used by the special education teacher to get the child to refrain from covering his eyes. Later candy was used as a reward.

It is interesting to note that at the beginning of each week, this child would revert somewhat to previous behavior of covering his eyes, but would quickly improve by the middle of the week.

CASE IV

The aim of this case study was the elimination of this mentally retarded girl's attention-seeking behavior such as talking out of turn, constantly seeking teacher's attention, and picking on other students.

The baseline information revealed a high rate of attention seeking (see Figure 4).

The special education teacher reported that this child showed

very little interest in receiving a reward until the experiment was expanded to include the whole class. Suddenly, this child realized that other students were receiving rewards all around her and she was not getting any reward. She suddenly dropped her undesirable behavior.

PROBLEM: Covering Eyes

NAME: Male

REWARD: Verbal Praise, Later Candy

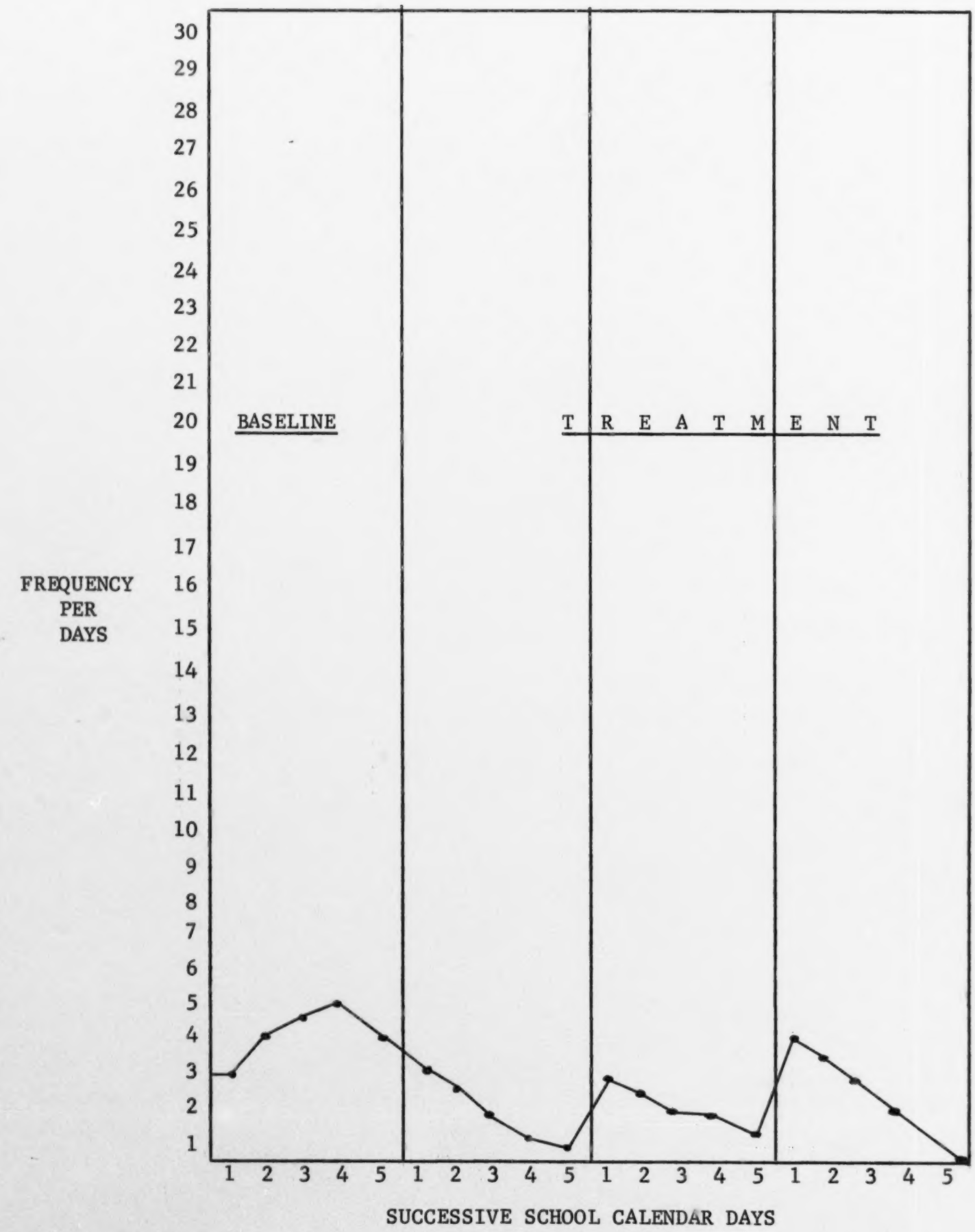

FIGURE 3

PROBLEM: Repeated Distractions

NAME: Female

REWARD: Candy, Later Special Toys

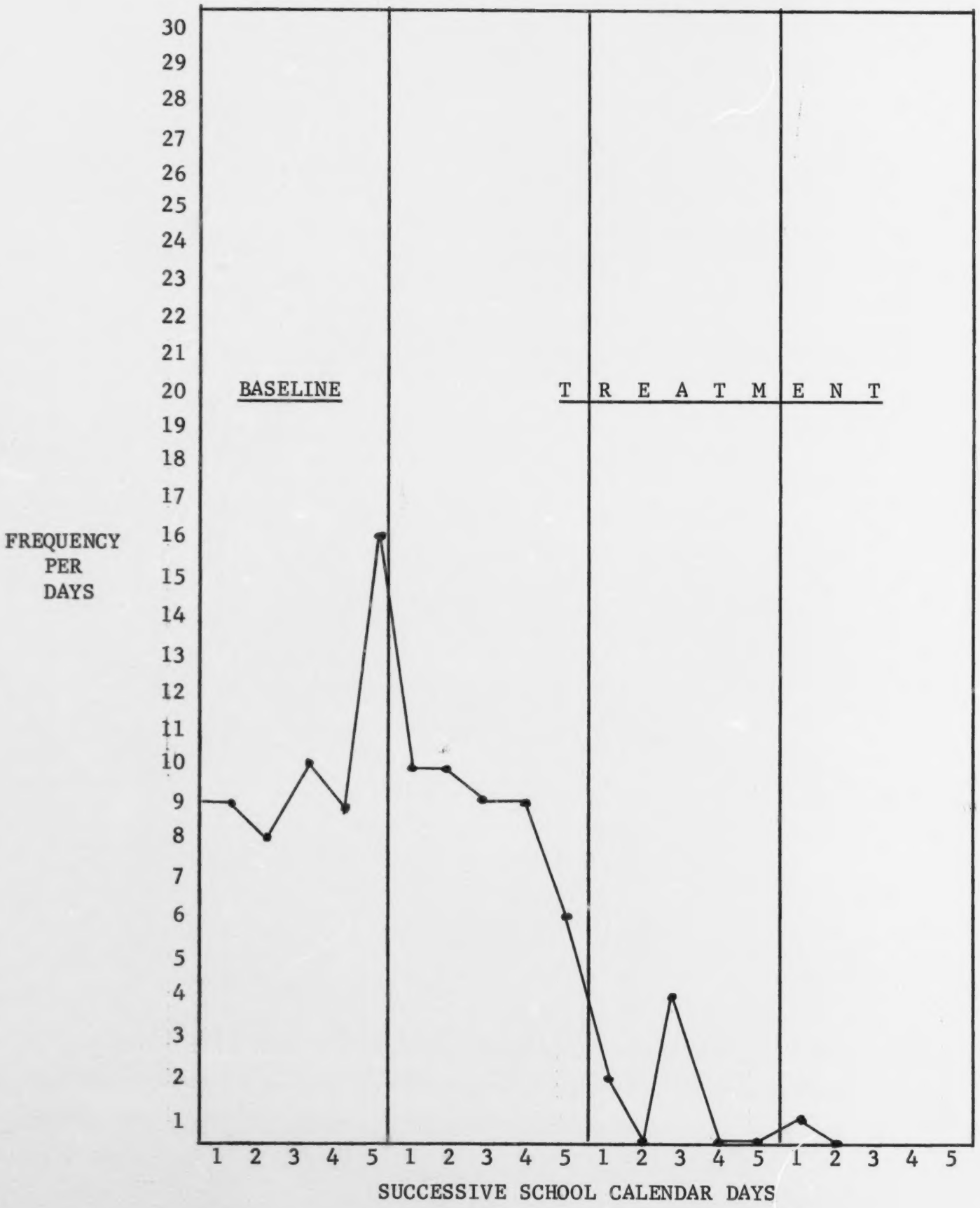

FIGURE 4

SECTION II

PEABODY REBUS READING PROGRAM

Group One

Special Education Master Teacher	Special Education Teachers
Radcliffe, Wanda	Boggs, Evelyn Bryan, Ruth Riffle, Stella

The in-service training program took place in the Webster County Public School System.

The teachers were special education teachers who work with educable mentally retarded children.

The in-service training consisted of a discussion of the Rebus material and demonstrations as to how to use the material properly.

Other meetings were concerned with discussions of the progress of the students who were using material up to this point, and methods for implementing this approach in the future.

CASE V

This girl was reported to recognize only five words after four years in school. The child became enthusiastic about the new reading material, especially with the "magic" red and green that automatically told her that her response was correct or not.

The child completed Book I without any need for review. The student was also able to complete Book II and is now in Book III. The child has shown growth in her ability to follow directions and recognize words.

At the present time, this girl is ready to start in the transitional level of the Rebus Reading Program.

CASE VI

Prior to this study, this mentally retarded boy had completed two pre-primers in three years. He had shown a great deal of frustration and dissatisfaction with his inability to go beyond the primer level of reading.

This student was intrigued with the "magic" red and green that automatically told him when a response was correct or not.

He was able to complete Book I but needed some drill with words such as "they" and "at." This child has also moved through Book II and into Book III with a great deal of confidence and happiness concerning reading.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Both students gained confidence through various medias which were used to help them to feel more secure with this new type of reading. Such approaches as the following helped them to develop more confidence:

1. They made yarn puppets who read the stories, thus little hands hold puppets at the beginning of each line and little fingers can't point to each word; therefore, more fluent reading is resulting.

2. Red And Blue Are On Me was reinforced by cutting out spots of red and blue and putting them on the students, the teacher, and the puppets. Then sentences were constructed such as red and blue are on _____.

3. Paper bag puppets were used to show the relationship and to reinforce learning of the s ending on boys, dogs, and cats.

The teachers also stated that this reading program has been a worthwhile experience for both students because: (1) they have experienced a form of reading success, (2) they have acquired left to right skills that were greatly lacking prior to the Rebus Reading Program, (3) both students are aware that reading is fun, (4) both students have discovered that there are many ways to read; for example, with puppets, from the chalkboard, from big charts with hugh sentences, and the flannelboard, (5) both students have shown a remarkable improvement in communicative skills, (6) both students have a better relationship with their teacher, and (7) both students have been able to impress their parents with the fact that they are now able to learn to read.

Group Two

Special Education Master Teacher	Special Education Teachers
Elswick, Rosemary	Marks, Lois Summers, Gloria Turner, Bernice Vaugh, Oran

The in-service training program took place at Glenville State College in Gilmer County.

Through a series of lectures, discussions and demonstrations, the special education teachers learned about the Rebus approach and were trained to administer this new method of reading.

Two of these special education teachers taught trainable and educable mentally retarded children. A third teacher was a remedial reading specialist. The fourth person was a senior at Glenville State College who was majoring in special education.

CASE VII

This boy was enrolled in a class for educable mentally retarded children. He had always had problems with reading and possessed a great dislike for this academic skill.

The use of the Rebus reading approach fascinated this child. The idea that symbols could stand for words acted as the motivation.

The child finished Book I, and he had only 30 incorrect responses out of 384 frames.

In Book II this boy missed only 25 responses. In Book III, which is heavy with the transition from symbols to words, this boy could correctly do 420 of the 494 frames.

CASE VIII

This boy was enrolled in a class for educable mentally retarded children. Prior to this study, this boy was in the readiness reading group.

He was also enthusiastic about this new method of reading. Being able to read, even symbols, was a new and novel experience to him.

The completion of Book I of the Rebus reading set found this child to successfully complete 371 frames out of 389 frames.

After completing Book III, he could handle 418 frames of symbols and words with no difficulty.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

The special education teachers of these boys remarked that after the completion of Book III, the boys were pleased with their ability to read spelled words.

Both special education teachers felt that the Rebus reading approach was most effective with the educable mentally retarded in the following skills as stated in the teacher's manual for the Rebus series.

1. The normal left-to-right, down the page, and page-to-page progression in reading.
2. The awareness that basic units of language and that sentences are combinations of words.
3. Use of pictorial and context clues.
4. Comprehension skills.
5. Workbook and test-taking skills.
6. Procedures for answering matching, multiple-choice, "Yes" or "No," and completion-type questions.
7. Structural analysis skills.
8. Rhyming.
9. Punctuation.
10. Experience in reading stories in book format.
11. Wider range of vocabulary.

Group Three

Special Education Master Teacher	Special Education Teachers
Haywood, Scott	Clark, Susan Erb, Nancy Thomas, Gary

The in-service training took place in the Putnam County School System. The special education teachers were teachers of educable mentally retarded children and teachers of slow-learning children.

The special education teachers were taught how to use the Rebus Reading Program and the significance of this method.

CASE IX

This case study concerned an educable mentally retarded boy who had a sight vocabulary of approximately 15 words. He was very poor in comprehension, and could not grasp the phonetic approach to reading.

The Rebus approach fascinated him and gave him success in reading he had never known. This child had become so encouraged that he wanted to take the Rebus readers home to work on as homework.

At the present time, he is working on the third reader of the Rebus series.

CASE X

This student had no reading skill prior to the Rebus program. Within four weeks of using this reading method, this student developed a reading level of approximately 80 words.

At the present time, he is encountering difficulty in the transition of symbols to words. The problem centers around such words as "the," "this," "think," and "what." The problem is that several of these symbols involve the use of the hand or pointing fingers.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

This type of programmed learning, as presented in the Rebus series, was very effective in working with mentally retarded as well as the students with learning disabilities. However, the material presented did little to hold the interest of the older students. The special education teachers compensated for this by using the Rebus method with modifications. The

Rebus vocabulary was complete, but in order to make the reading more meaningful to the student, some new words were added. The special education teachers chose to use tools which the students were familiar with in everyday situations. Examples of these symbols are pictures of screwdriver, hammer, pliers, and saw. In addition, the students were asked to give some words which they thought were important to know. These words, transferred to symbols, related around automobiles and safety signs.

Group Four

Special Education Master Teacher	Special Education Teachers
Norman, Mary	Alexander, Linda Moore, Majorie Washington, Geraldine

The in-service training program took place at the Tiskelwah Elementary School in Charleston, Kanawha County.

The special education teachers were teachers of educable mentally retarded children who were in the primary and intermediate special education classes.

The training sessions were mainly concerned with examining the kits and developing different ways to implement this reading program.

CASE XI

This mentally retarded child was eleven years old, and had been reading on the first grade level. He had not responded to the traditional reading approach that had been used in this special education program.

When introduced to the Rebus Reading Program, he became fascinated with the idea of using the eraser to determine if his answers were correct.

This reading program was the first one that this student had shown any interest in at school. He became extremely happy when he found that the Rebus could be used to start sentences. Also, that he could read these sentences.

This reading approach had been most successful in creating an interest in this child to want to read. He had no trouble in moving into the transitional stage and is almost finished with the first reader.

CASE XII

This mentally retarded girl could only recognize a few words and had an emotional dislike for books. However, she became excited about the Rebus Reading Program. She picked up the symbols quickly, and for the first time in her school experiences, she had shown an interest in wanting to do more with this reading program than could be accomplished in the alloted time.

Surprisingly, she showed no problem in making the transition from the Rebus symbols to words. She is now in the first reader.

Group Five

Special Education Master Teacher	Special Education Teachers
Oakes, Ruth	Kellum, Laura West, Elaine

The in-service training program took place at the Sissonville Elementary School located in Kanawha County. The special education teachers were trained by the S.E.M.T. concerning the use of this Rebus reading approach and its functional application.

CASE XIII

This child had been attending school for four years, and had not moved beyond the readiness stage of reading. He became fascinated with this unique type of programmed learning.

The child's interest had been good, and for the first time had wanted to stay with a reading book longer than he had ever shown in the past.

The transition had been fairly easy for him, which was much of a surprise to the instructor.

CASE XIV

This child was similar to the one in Case XIII, in that he had attended school for three years, and had not had any success in moving beyond the readiness stage of reading. He had a great deal of trouble with the standard reading textbooks.

The student became fascinated with the idea of getting an immediate response to his knowledge of the symbols. The child never wanted to stop when the lesson was finished. The child had encountered the first bit of success in the reading program since attending school.

The transition stage from symbols to words was just beginning, but the child had shown a great deal of interest in recognition of words.

Group Six

Special Education Master Teacher	Special Education Teachers
Thornton, Greta	Botkins, Kathrine Dean, Mary Lou Karnes, Zelda

The in-service training program took place in the Putnam County

School System. This special education master teacher met with these teachers in special education through individual training sessions.

The special education teachers were impressed with the Peabody Rebus Reading Program. These teachers noticed that their students who were very poor in reading were highly motivated by this type of reading activity.

Most of the mentally retarded students, with whom this approach was used, moved rapidly through the first set of Rebus books.

It became apparent that the special education teachers and their mentally retarded students considered the Rebus reading approach most beneficial, and progress in reading was noticeable.

SECTION III

PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

Group One

Special Education Master Teacher	Special Education Teachers
Cook, Iva Dean	Clary, Sue Herrell, Francis Johnson, Doris

The in-service training sessions took place at Fairfield School, in Huntington, Cabell County. The special education teachers who participated in this study were as follows: two teachers of educable mentally retarded children and one teacher of trainable mentally retarded children.

The special education teachers were introduced to the theory of psycholinguistic skills and its educational implications. These special education teachers were taught how to administer Dr. Lockerson's "Evaluation of Psycholinguistic Skills."

Following these sessions, the special education teachers were introduced to various materials and techniques for improving psycholinguistic skills. The book, Helping Young Children Develop Language Skills: A Book of Activities by Merle B. Karnes, was received with a great deal of enthusiasm.

The fact that professional conventions, school holidays and the nearness of the end of school, all came at approximately the same period of time, did not allow for much objective evaluation for measuring psycholinguistic skills or the use of remediation techniques.

However, these special education teachers did state that through this approach they were able to localize the specific psycholinguistic deficiencies that were present in their students. The special education

teachers were also very impressed with the fact that they had learned what approaches and techniques to use to improve the students' psycholinguistic skills.

Group Two

Special Education Master Teacher	Special Education Teachers
Ashworth, Wilhelmina	Allen, Darlene Beni, Irene Conner, Madge Grant, Carol Kennedy, Betty Kiser, Ruby Lafferty, Roscoe Lilly, Betty Plymale, Mildred Preast, Ruth Sherman, Joyce Williams, Dorothy

The in-service training sessions took place in the Fayette County Public School System. Twelve special education teachers attended these sessions that were led by the county supervisor of special education.

The special education teachers spent considerable time collecting and acquiring the necessary material to administer Dr. Lockerson's "Evaluation of Psycholinguistic Skills." Thus, each special education teacher was able to have a complete individual kit to administer this test.

These special education teachers, as well as those in Group One of this section, were enthusiastic about the fact that they could pinpoint the specific learning disability.

The fact that they could also have available specific remediation techniques related to specific psycholinguistic disabilities made the in-service training more functional.

These special education teachers stated that if this method were used early in the school year to determine a child's learning disabilities, it would be more profitable to them.

Group Three

Special Education Master Teacher	Special Education Teachers
Lambert, Nancy	Holland, Mary Shuff, Gladys Spradling, Debbie Wooster, Hazel

The training of special education teachers in Kanawha County concerning psycholinguistics took place at Tiskelwah Elementary School.

The special education teachers were taught the theory of psycholinguistics and trained to use Dr. Lockerson's "Evaluation of Psycholinguistic Skills."

As was mentioned with other groups in this section, the special education teachers were enthusiastic and eager to try this new approach, and became proficient in locating the specific disability.

Although these special education teachers were not able to spend ample time with their pupils to really prove that significant progress had been made, these teachers mentioned that they did notice some improvement.

The special education teachers reported that in addition to learning to pinpoint the disability, they were extremely excited with the idea that they were exposed to techniques that would help the child improve or correct his learning disability.

SECTION IV

PROGRAMMED LEARNING MATERIAL

Group One

Special Education Master Teacher	Special Education Teachers
Hanrahan, Harriet	Bennett, Hilda Tabscott, Brenda

The in-service training program took place at Fairfield School in Huntington, Cabell County.

The special education teachers taught educable mentally retarded students on the intermediate and junior high school levels.

The in-service training sessions were held through informal group discussions. The sessions were conducted informally so the special education teachers could ask questions and discuss problems concerning the use of the material. The sessions centered around different types of programming and the terminology used in various programming materials. The Mott Basic Language Skills and the Fitzhugh Plus Programs were most favorably received by the special education teachers.

At other sessions of the in-service training, the teachers examined the various types of programming material and were allowed to take some of this material home to examine. The special education teachers were then asked to try some of these programmed materials with their students.

The special education teachers reported that their students showed interest in the material. These special education teachers also reported that there was noticeable progress particularly in reading activities. However, sufficient time was not available to substantiate any significant progress.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This report has described (a) the training of fifteen special education master teachers regarding three new methods: operant conditioning, psycholinguistics and programmed learning material, (b) the training of forty-seven special education teachers concerning the theoretical understanding and the functional use of the three methods, and (c) the results of the application of these new methods with educable and trainable mentally retarded students.

The results of this study show that the training of special education master teachers in methods has merit provided that the instructor is skilled in the presentation of each method. The theoretical model of each method is presented precisely and its application documented. There is also need for the teacher to apply the methods in their classroom immediately to determine its workability.

The in-service training of special education teachers proved beneficial provided the instructions were given by individuals who were properly trained as leaders, and had had experience in the application of these new methods in realistic classroom settings.

Teachers were willing to participate in this training program provided the methods were pertinent and that they could see a relationship to the solutions of problems in their classroom.

The fact that forty-seven special education teachers are now knowledgeable concerning these new methods as a result of the in-service training program, places them in position to train other teachers in

special education which will allow for more mentally retarded children to be taught through these methods.

Once the special education teachers understand these methods, they are capable of developing creative and adaptive variations that are applicable to the use of these newer methods in their classrooms.

One teacher found that the Rebus symbols were not meaningful to the older mentally retarded students. The instructor, with the help of his students, developed a series of homemade Rebus symbols related to objects that were more pertinent to the students.

In another situation, the teachers found that they could correlate the craft activity of making hand puppets for the improvement of reading skills. The teachers found that the hand puppets encouraged students to read more fluently, and also helped to alleviate the common practice of finger pointing of words.

One group of teachers, that were working with the psycholinguistic method, developed kits to help them to implement the test for the evaluation of psycholinguistic skills.

It was also noted that some teachers were better able to use the operant conditioning method if the classical terminology was changed to everyday teaching terms.

Finally, one special education master teacher recommended that since operant conditioning appeared to be successful, a state-wide operant conditioning clearing house should be established. The purpose of this type of clearing house would be to help other teachers, by means of a central agency, determine what rewards do work with the mentally retarded under what conditions in order to improve the behavior patterns of their students.

The fact that these special education teachers have learned to use these new methods with a great deal of accuracy has given them an insight that is almost unattainable through such conventional training procedures as reading research studies or having the methods demonstrated to them.

Although it cannot be conclusively documented, it appears from this study that:

1. Teachers in special education are interested in learning new methods as long as these techniques are relevant to the classroom.

2. Special education teachers are capable of assuming leadership roles for training other special education teachers.

3. Many special education teachers are creative in developing innovative ideas for implementing new methods.

4. A higher priority should be given to the reorganization of methods courses in teacher training programs.

5. Finally, it appears that the high priority in the special education teacher training program related to studying various types of characteristics of the mentally retarded need to be reevaluated.
   This information is not necessarily as relevant as we may wish to think it is, regarding the teaching of academic skills or for improving the specific behavior patterns of a mentally retarded student in the special education classroom.

DISCUSSION

The rapid deluge of new methods for educating the mentally retarded has made it impossible for teachers to keep up with all of these new ideas.

Traditionally, it is assumed that our teachers learn the most pertinent new methods at our schools of higher learning. The usual professional approach has been to discuss with teachers the newest methods from the theoretical point of view or assign library readings pertaining to the use of new methods in experimental reports.

The public schools, in their desire to make the exposure to newer methods more meaningful, have encouraged teacher participation through workshops or in-service training programs. Although both procedures have some merit, this investigator considers them somewhat unrealistic. It cannot be assumed that merely exposing teachers to any new method no matter how well it worked in research settings will guarantee that it will be used by the teacher in the classroom. Further, it cannot be taken for granted that, even if the new method is being used in the classroom, the special education teacher is using it correctly.

Based on the experiences of this study, the following recommendations are presented for the implementation of the training of special education teachers.

Teacher Training—Master's Level

It is apparent from this study that many of our special education teachers, particularly those who are working towards a master's degree, want to see more course work in which the relevancy of what they learn within the protective environment of the university classroom can be

implemented in the everyday classroom situation.

One approach to consider is the possibility of allowing graduate students to take more independent study courses. Through these independent study courses, the special education teachers will have ample opportunity to field test the use of any new methods of teaching in order to demonstrate its value in the classroom.

Another approach is to work out a cooperative arrangement with the special education departments in the community public schools to allow teachers to receive college credit for in-service meetings, provided such activities are worthy and comparable to graduate school standards.

Internship at Schools of Higher Learning

The prospective special education teacher should be required to have had the experience of using a new method with a selective group of mentally retarded students in the controlled setting. The emphasis should be in using the new method properly, evaluating its merit, and learning to implement or alternate the procedures, if needed.

Once a special education teacher has demonstrated that she knows how to use this method, she should try it in a community special education class.

This internship training program must be accomplished under the supervision of a faculty member who is familiar with new methods. It is imperative that the internship training program be the sole responsibility of this faculty member.

It should be clarified that this internship program is not to be confused with practice teaching. The latter is recognized as the final

phase to the teacher training program. It usually takes place in the community under the supervision of a special education teacher. However, it is not always possible, although the supervising teacher may have sincere dedication to be acquainted with newer methods. In fact, special education teachers should be well-versed in new methods prior to practice teaching.

Special Education Master Teachers

The main purpose of the special education master teacher is to acquaint inexperienced teachers in the proper use of new methods. This can be accomplished by allowing the special education master teacher to supervise the inexperienced special education teacher in the use of newer ideas or even demonstrate the proper way of using newer methods within special education classrooms.

It is highly recommended that the special education master teachers be trained in the skills of presenting new ideas and in the leadership qualities that are needed in dealing with other special education teachers.

Regarding this recommendation, it is necessary to state that the special education master teacher can serve as an excellent resource for other teachers in special education only if this individual is free of administrative responsibilities.

This approach has possibilities for a graduate course in special education at the schools of higher learning.

In-service Meetings

In order for these in-service meetings to be worthwhile, teachers must learn how to present their findings concerning the use of any new

method in objective ways. It also requires teachers to do extensive planning in order that the in-service meetings are not considered a waste of time. The emphasis on proper presentation of new materials is to show other special education teachers the practicalities of using new methods in their classroom.

The in-service meetings must be regularly scheduled, and at times that are most suitable for the teachers.

Classroom Research

Special education teachers should be encouraged to conduct small research pilot studies in the classroom. This teacher is in the best position to test any new teaching method which has merit in a realistic setting. The need for classroom research is to substantiate or disprove what has been stated and documented by studies that were conducted in clinical settings.

It is not enough for the special education teacher to show she has used any method, but rather to substantiate its objective merit from the practicalities of the classroom.

Method Center

The trend is for many school systems to develop material centers. In most cases, these material centers are usually a central location that contain sources of supplies and books that have been purchased or donated by publishing companies. Although many of them are worthwhile, it does not necessarily follow that teachers will use the material merely because the value of any of these materials has been demonstrated.

It is recommended that the special education departments in our public schools include in the proposed method center the ideas of their

teachers. For example, a special education teacher report on using the new method, an innovative idea that has been tried in the special education classroom, or suggestions that teachers have used in relationship to behavioral problems.

It is also worth mentioning that it is possible to combine this method center with the in-service training to show films of teachers using methods, and this may be much more advantageous than a mere discussion about new methods.

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